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D-R-A-F-T

28 October 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

STAT FROM: [redacted]

SUBJECT: Review of Future MSA Products Related to CLAS


## SUMMARY

On 27 October 1987, several key members of the CLAS project met with a variety of senior MSA officials at MSA headquarters in Atlanta to discuss what MSA plans and estimates were regarding future products that could be used for CLAS.

MSA is in the midst of its biennial planning process so the various officials could not share with us all the details of their corporate plans, many of which will apparently be decided and announced within the next six weeks, but they did strongly suggest that they are unlikely to develop IDMS/DB versions of several of their projected future packages which are of particular interest to the CLAS team. They indicated that MSA was strongly committed to increasing its support for the public sector and would be developing more integrated systems that could be used by governmental entities but for the near term at least they would be concentrating on packages that operated in a VSAM/CICS environment.

They said that their own survey of the market (apparently based largely on reports in FOCUS) showed that the IDMS user community, particularly in government was not very large so that MSA would not find it profitable to continue to develop IDMS versions of its applications packages. They said that they would continue to support the Agency in its use of the current and planned MSA packages that are written to run under IDMS/DB and urged the Agency to reconsider its commitment to the Cullinet database.


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1. On 27 October 1986, a group of Agency people from Logistics, Finance, Information Technology, and the Audit Staff visited MSA headquarters in Atlanta to determine what future MSA capabilities were being developed that could be used for the joint OL/OF/OIT project CLAS. A preliminary evaluation of MSA packages was completed in September, following a six-month test period and planning for the next phase of the project is under way. Agency participants included [redacted] of Logistics; [redacted] of Finance; [redacted] of Information Technology; and [redacted] of Audit. The agenda followed the outline shown in the attachment prepared by MSA.

2. [redacted] opened the session by saying that the purpose of the meeting as far as the Agency participants were concerned was to get a fix on actual vice "planned" availabilities of MSA packages particularly with regard to the FRED system that had been demonstrated at the IMAGE conference in Denver. He also noted that there were still some differing views among the members of the CLAS team concerning the respective merits of the Cullinet and MSA packages and this session was designed to provide a relook at the MSA capabilities.

3. Jon Gearhart made the first presentation: a description and demonstration of the cluster of financial packages (referred to as FRED) designed to serve the public sector. The system includes a Budgetary Control package that has a budget preparation capability and provides for monthly allotments of an annual appropriation. In addition to being able to maintain several different budget levels, the system allows for management of projects either on a life-to-date or fiscal basis. Gearhart also described the report writing features of the system and indicated that Information Expert and Expert Query would replace the custom reporting that characterizes the packages that the Agency tested during the past six months.

4. In response to questions from [redacted] Gearhart said that the Financial Controller package, which serves as the traffic cop for the system, is currently available but not in an IDMS version. As noted by the Finance officers, there is redundant data in the available funds file and the general ledger but the MSA designers felt that this feature enabled the system to operate more efficiently by permitting the general ledger to be updated on a batch basis while funds availability would be maintained in real time.


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5. For the demonstration of the purchasing package that is included with FRED, Gearhart went through a sequence of operations using a Rolls Royce as the requested item. In the course of the demonstration, there were examples of establishing commitments and obligations and the capability for establishing approvals based on identity of originator, type of item, item cost, or virtually any other policy rule the system manager wanted to set was shown. The system then applies a set of accounting rules to determine how the Financial Controller will extract information from the files shared by Purchasing and Accounts Payable (commodities, documents, vendors et al.) to generate debits and credits for the General Ledger.

6. Gearhart said that the FRED system that runs under VSAM/CICS will be generally available in January, 1987. He also said that the Inventory package that is done on a supply basis as contrasted to the inventory system based on planned replenishment (the package that is part of the Manufacturing module that has been used by Logistics up to now) will also be available in January 1987. He noted, however that the integration of the new inventory package into FRED will not be available until a year later (January, 1988) and that would be the VSAM/CICS version.

STAT 7. In response to [redacted] question as to how travel orders would be processed within the purchasing system, Gearhart said that they would be treated as travel authorizations and the travel order itself would be prepared within the purchasing system as a special purchase order with the traveler as the vendor.

8. Steve Koporec of MSA made a presentation on the standalone Order Processing package because MSA understood that the order processing incorporated within the Manufacturing module did not satisfy Agency requirements for order processing. His briefing and demonstration illustrated the three principal elements of order processing: a)order entry, b)shipment support and billing, and c)order management. The package is currently operational in an IDMS version and is being used by Hays Modem.

STAT 9. In response to [redacted] question as to how many screens were in the Order Processing package, Koporec said that there were 65-70 screens but that at least half of these were inquiry screens and a large number of the remainder were used for maintenance. He estimated that a typical user could be trained in less than one day how to enter an order but that a fully effective user would probably require total training time of about a week. Performance would be likely to be improved, however, if the training were given over a period of several months with plenty of time provided for practice.


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10. Next Brian Cohen, a senior manager for the MSA Database Environment Group and one of the key people in providing technical support for the Agency, spoke about MSA plans for developing IDMS/R versions of a number of the packages described earlier by Gearhart and Koporec. Before beginning his remarks on plans, he noted that the Agency had expressed some dissatisfaction with the level of technical support that MSA had provided thus far and he said that he believed that the four to five weeks of his people's time had been in line with what might be expected in a contract of this type. Epperson noted that his impression was that the level of support had been more on the order of seven to ten days total. The subject was not further pursued in the meeting.

11. Cohen indicated that in connection with the biennial planning process, he had reexamined the present and potential MSA user community and found that the number of IDMS users was not all that large, giving MSA some pause in considering whether to develop IDMS versions of all of its major applications. In response to

STAT [redacted] question concerning how many IDMS users he found in the federal government, Cohen said he thought it was on the order of

STAT 20. [redacted] said that she believed the number was more like 40 to 50.

12. Cohen said that it would cost MSA an estimated $600,000 to $800,000 to develop IDMS versions of all the elements of the FRED system plus the inventory package that could be linked into it. Over half of this cost was associated with the testing of the different version. He said that VSAM/CICS was the direction most of MSA's customers were going and that those who were looking for a relational database appeared to be waiting to see what IBM did with DB2.

13. Cohen said that one of the main advantages of any DBMS was that it provided automatic journaling, security, and recovery procedures. He said that MSA had a transaction log file built into its packages but had disabled those portions of the programs in the modules provided to the Agency, because they were redundant to the functions performed by IDMS.

14. In further commenting on DBMSs, Cohen said that IDMS/DC was very similar to CICS but that IDMS/DB was a "completely different animal". He asked somewhat rhetorically why the Agency was so strongly committed to IDMS? He added that MSA itself was firmly committed to having SQL versions of all of its products.

15 In response to questions, Cohen said that MSA will definitely produce IDMS versions of the Financial Controller, the 5.0 version of Accounts Payable, and the next version of the Purchasing module. The Budgetary Control and Inventory modules, however are not definitely programmed for IDMS versions and Cohen implied that they may not make the cut.



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